562 592 [583] 587 a daughter and no son she has the right to remain a hundred days in the house. Then if the heirs order her to leave she must go, but her daughter remains as part of the heir's household, and he has the right to choose her husband and dispose of her. In practice the widow may remain in the house as "levirate wife" of one of her brothers-in-law, and very commonly does so among the Dukagini. In Maltsia e Madhe the practice is obsolete.

589 562 [593] If the widow has had a son who has predeceased his father, she has more consideration. If the house is a small one, she may live in it if capable of carrying on. If a large one, she may live as a member of the heir's household so long as she is unmarried. If she elects to return to her father, the heir, or heirs, must supply her regularly with wool for spinning, bread, cheese, and other necessaries so long as she remains unmarried.

421 A married daughter has no right to anything whatever of her father's property; she no longer belongs to his "house."

TRIBAL BUSINESS

623 Business relating to the whole tribe requires a very large council. In a large tribe the council may be about a hundred. It includes the heads of houses, the heads of mehalas, the bariaktar, and twelve specially chosen elders famed for their intelligence. Such a council, for example, was needed to decide if each tribe would accept the Turkish Constitution in 1908; to decide if a tribe would revolt or aid another that has revolted; what side it would take in war, and so forth. Smaller councils dealt with pasture lands; how many beasts each house might pasture upon the common lands; the date at which pasturing might begin.

421 311 [134] 312 The rights of wood-cutting, too, were thus regulated. Certain groups had rights in certain woods. Unluckily no one ever thought of replanting. Great harm has been done by deciding to burn a forest in the hope of obtaining pasture land; only too often the result being that the winter rain carried away the soil and left bare rock. The water supply is also controlled by council, especially in those districts where an ingenious system of channels carries water great distances and takes it across valleys on rude aqueducts made of hollowed tree-stems.

689 In time of scarcity the number of hours per week in which a man may turn the water into his fields is jealously regulated. Purposely defiling wells and springs was punishable.

671 Not only all the above laws are ascribed to Lek, but many rules intended to keep the peace. For example, that men marching abreast must keep the length of a gun-barrel apart, lest in turning hastily it

626 585 married by P. Francesco one ran away six weeks ago and cannot be found.

584 When I was there in 1908 things were better, but old customs clung. The main idea of the clergy was to insist that a betrothal must not be broken off, but to prohibit child betrothals.

583 585 All priests were ordered to question the girl as to her wishes before celebrating the marriage. Few girls, however, have the courage to resist the commands of the house and the usage of the tribe. Among the wilder tribes girls who objected were still sometimes carried off bound with cords and forced to comply; and, cohabitation having taken place, the priest married them.

581 584 Among the Dukagini tribes infant betrothal was still common. The fine old bairaktar of Nikaj, Bash Bairimi, told me that he thanked God he owed no one blood; all his five sons were alive and four were married. The fifth, aged twenty-five, was yet unmarried. Not because Bash grudged the money. He would pay willingly, but could find no maiden good enough. He wanted good blood. A woman of bad stock makes endless trouble. He had betrothed the four elder lads to unborn brides; but had not done this with the fifth and was sorry, for all good maidens were already betrothed. He was looking out for a suitable widow. Money, he repeated, was no object; he would not stick at a few more napoleons to buy a really suitable woman.

583 A result of high bride-price and shortage of women was a good deal of woman-stealing between the outlying tribes. I was told that many of the blood-feuds of Shala were based upon the abduction of girls from neighbour tribes. If a betrothed girl went off with another man, willingly or unwillingly, a blood-feud always started. She was the property of the family that had bought her and had no rights over her person.

584 589 *Escape from Betrothal.*—In one way only could a girl evade a marriage she disliked. If she could find twelve elders of her tribe group to act as con-jurors she could swear perpetual virginity. If she broke the vow the honour of the con-jurors was blackened and a blood-feud ensued. It was not easy for her to find twelve con-jurors.

689 626 689 562 939 Having succeeded and taken the vow in the church or mosque, her status is, I believe, unique. In the Maltsia e Madhe she can, if she pleases, dress as a man. She associates with the men on equal terms, and eats and smokes with them. She may carry arms. The reason given is that as she has no man to support her she must support herself, and a herdsman's life is the only way. I met altogether four virgins who wore men's clothes, but none carried arms. I heard of three more. One in the Djakova district was said to have served in the Turkish Army undetected.

2: Durham B-5 (ca. 1910)1928 EG1 Albania EG1

Birth, Marriage, and Death

Among the Dukagini I met several virgins, but all wore women's dress. As a rule, in all districts, the sworn virgin became servant to one of the priests, and often joined the Third Order of St. Francis. Some became nuns or worked in one of the Scutari nunneries.

In the Maltsia e Madhe, in the case of a man with several daughters and no son, by his wish one could swear virginity and act as his son. He could bequeath to her his house and land for her lifetime, after which it reverted to the nearest male heir. Such a virgin had the right to sell her younger sisters. Such an one, aged about forty, I met in the Hoti tribe (Plate VIII).

In the Dukagini tribes, where the virgins do not wear men's dress, they cannot inherit and live on and work the land during their lifetime as in Maltsia e Madhe. The land goes to the next male heir, and he must pay the virgin yearly 300 okos of maize, 18 of rakija, and 30 of wine, and she can enforce payment by appeal to the Council of Elders.

One case only did I hear of a virgin breaking her vow. She had been for years servant to the priest of Baitza, and was accounted holy. On his death she was forty, and shocked the country-side by eloping with a Gusinje Moslem. No one dared follow to take vengeance in such a dangerous district, but it was piously hoped that she would pay the price of her crime in hell.

On the way from Berisha to Apripa we passed a huge rock. A virgin, so holy that she was almost a saint, had vowed to carry it to the church at Berisha. She carried it safely a long way. Then in the forest she heard a shepherd fluting, and looked at him and admired him. Straightway she forgot the heavenly things on which she had fixed her mind; she dropped the rock, and when she tried to pick it up again found she had lost her miraculous strength. And there the rock stands.

In spite of many inquiries, I failed to hear of a case of a young man refusing to marry his betrothed bride. People were surprised I should ask and always replied: "But why should he? God has made all women alike." On the other hand, I met some cases of blind fury ending in blood-feud where a father had broken faith and sold his betrothed daughter to someone else. I argued with one man who was "in blood" that it was stupid to want to marry a girl he had never seen and who did not want him—people in other lands would laugh at him. He furiously replied that the girl had been paid for years ago by his father; the return of the bride-price made no difference; she was their property, and he would get her if he had to shoot her husband to do so. His honour and that of his whole house had been blackened. If people in other lands laughed at him it only showed they had no honour.

I asked often why the young men did not choose for themselves,

10:Hasluck F-5 (1926-1939)1954 EGl Albania EGl

[688] 681 It was not the theft but the sacrilege that on this occasion called the tribe of Orosh to a General Assembly and made them pronounce even the death sentence; without the sacrilege the fine would have been penalty enough. Murder of a priest, again heinous sacrilege, raised the same issues, but without hope of any reprieve from death save what secret flight might provide. Murder of a guest or of a man with whom the murderer had previously sworn an oath of peace, that is to say, of persons who had a right to protection, also came before a General Assembly and was punished by the severest penalties, including death. Yet theft in the ordinary way was [694] handled by elders and punished by a fine, and murder of the ordinary type was left to the victim's family and punished by blood vengeance. These were crimes against the individual and matter for individual handling. Sacrilege, however, and the murder of protected persons, were crimes against society, the former threatening the authority of the Church and the latter the tribal fabric.

689 623 When a man's general behaviour was a public menace or nuisance, he usually found himself before a General Assembly. To begin with, the elders of his social unit took the matter up as was their duty, attempting first to reason him into a better frame of mind. If this failed, they had to call a plenary meeting of the village to try the culprit and to carry out whatever sentence was pronounced. This was usually burning down his house and leaving his land untilled for a specific number of years. If he still persisted in his evil-doing, and this was serious socially speaking, the elders could call the whole tribe to their assistance. For public pests incited public extermination, and this required the sanction and the whole force of the tribe. Miss Durham relates what she calls 'an amazing case of wholesale justice' which occurred in the Mirditë tribe, Fan, in February 1912. A certain family in this tribe had become notorious for evil-doing, robbing, shooting and general misconduct. A 'gathering of the whole tribe' condemned all the males of the family to death. Men were appointed to lie in wait for them on a certain day and pick them off. And on that day the whole seventeen of them were shot. One was only five and another only twelve years old. It was even proposed to kill an unfortunate woman who was pregnant in case she should bear a male and so renew the evil.[1]

[1] Durham, op. cit. p. 75.